

## IN THE CLAIMS

Each claim of the application is set forth below with a parenthetical notation immediately following the claim number indicating the claim status. The Examiner's entry of the claim amendments under Section 1.121 is respectfully requested.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An insulator ~~insulating~~ sleeve for a ~~beverage~~ container having a sidewalls, comprising:

an expansible sleeve defining ~~comprising~~ first and second opposingly oriented openings and a passageway therebetween, wherein the sleeve defines a plurality of expansible slits therein; and

wherein the ~~beverage~~ container is received within the passageway through the first or the second opening, expanding the plurality of slits into an open condition ~~position~~ thereby expanding a diameter of the sleeve such that the sleeve conforms to the sidewalls of the container, and wherein the sleeve assumes a collapsed state when the container is not present in the passageway, and wherein in the collapsed state the slits are in a closed condition and the sleeve is deformable into a flattened configuration.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating~~ sleeve of claim 1 wherein the slits are vertically oriented when the sleeve is engaged over the ~~beverage~~ container.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating~~ sleeve of claim 1 further comprising a band region ~~proximate~~ encircling the first opening, wherein the band region is substantially non-expansible permitting the container to be received within the cylindrical member only through the second opening.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating~~ sleeve of ~~claim 4~~ claim 3 wherein no slits are formed in the band region.

5. (CANCEL)

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating~~ sleeve of claim ~~4~~ 3 wherein the ~~beverage~~ container further comprises a neck region between a container region of a first diameter and a container region of a second diameter, and wherein the band region encircles the neck region.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating sleeve~~ of claim 1 wherein when the plurality of slits are expanded to the open condition, a diameter of the first opening is sufficient to insert the ~~beverage~~ container.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating sleeve~~ of claim 1 wherein a sleeve length is less than a container height.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating sleeve~~ of claim 1 wherein a sleeve length is substantially similar to a container height.

10. (CANCEL)

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating sleeve~~ of claim 1 further comprising a printed material ~~element disposed~~ on a surface thereof.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The insulator ~~insulating sleeve~~ of claim 1 wherein the plurality of slits are expandable such that ~~beverage~~ containers of various sizes and shapes can be received within the passageway.

13. (NEW) The insulator of claim 1 where the material of the sleeve comprises an insulating foam.

14. (NEW) An insulator for a container having sidewalls, comprising:  
an expansible sleeve defining first and second opposing openings and a passageway therebetween, a material of the sleeve defines a plurality of expansible slits therein; and  
a substantially non-expansible band region at the first opening;  
wherein a narrower region of the container is received within the passageway through the second opening, expanding the plurality of slits into an open condition such that the sleeve conforms to the sidewalls of the container, wherein insertion of the container into the sleeve continues until the band region exerts an inwardly directed force on the sidewall that prevents further insertion.